

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANTANA 01399 01 OF 03 251229Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-02 AID-05 PC-01 IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /123 W
-----047008 251325Z /43

R 250642Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 783
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
DIA WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ANTANANARIVO 1399

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MA
SUBJ: LAW AND ORDER IN MADAGASCAR: SEQUELS TO MAY 29-30 RIOTS

REF: A) ANT 1011 AND PREVIOUS; B) 77 ANT 2304

1. SUMMARY: THE MAY 29-30 BREAKDOWN IN LAW AND ORDER IN
ANTANANARIVO HAS LED TO EFFORTS TO REINFORCE THE
CAPITAL'S DISGRUNTLED POLICE FORCES BUT IT WILL TAKE A
CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE, AS WELL AS TO
IMPROVE PUBLIC SECURITY IN THE PROVINCES. THESE EFFOTS
WILL INCLUDE THE ACQUISITION OF MORE WEAPONRY AND
EQUIPMENT FOR THE SECURITY FORCES, MUCH OF IT FROM THE
SOCIALIST COUNTRIES BUT POSSIBLY INCLUDING LOCKHEED L-100
AIRCRAFT FROM THE U.S. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA AND THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANTANA 01399 01 OF 03 251229Z

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION APPARATUS CONTINUE TO BLAME
THE MAY 29-30 EVENTS ON FOREIGN ELEMENTS, DISREGARD-
ING THE FACT THAT CERTAIN PURELY MALAGASY
OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, UNABLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES
LEGITIMATELY, MAY WELL HAVE ENCOURAGED THE MOB ACTION ON THEIR OWN
IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT, AND COULD TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO DO IT AGAIN.

RATSIRAKA'S ABSENCE FROM THE SCENE DURING AND AFTER THE DISORDERS DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE COST HIM MUCH IN PUBLIC ESTEEM, NEVER HIGH TO START WITH, BUT THE FAILURE OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE THE PUBLIC SECURITY SITUATION MUST BE COUNTED AS A MINUS FOR HIS ADMINISTRATION, DIMINISHING HIS LONG RANGE PROSPECTS.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE CURFEW INSTITUTED ON MAY 29 WAS FINALLY LIFTED ON JULY 9. ITS MAINTENANCE OVER FIVE WEEKS TESTIFIES TO THE CONCERN CAUSED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY THE BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER WHICH TOOK PLACE ON MAY 29-30 AND THE VIRTUAL CESSATION OF OPERATION OF THE POLICE AS A PEACEKEEPING FORCE. INDIVIDUAL POLICEMEN CONTINUED TO DIRECT TRAFFIC AT SOME INTERSECTIONS AND TO DO PAPER WORK, BUT PATROLLING OF CITY IS STILL BEING UNDERTAKEN ALMOST ENTIRELY BY GENDARMERIE AND ARMY ELEMENTS.

3. EVENTS OF MAY 29-30 LED TO CONSIDERABLE DISCONTENT WITHIN POLICE FORCE AND ACCUSATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY ON STRIKE SINCE THE RIOTS. POLICE DISCONTENT STEMS FROM THEIR RESENTMENT AT HAVING BEEN ACCUSED OF BOTH BRUTALITY IN KILLING THE PSEUDO-STUDENT ON MAY 29 AND COWARDICE IN NOT RESISTING THE ATTACKS ON THE POLICE BUILDINGS AND THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ANTANA 01399 01 OF 03 251229Z

LOOTING OF THE STORES, WHEN IN FACT THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE 1975 COMPLETELY DISARMED. DISARMAMENT EARLY IN 1975 OCCURRED FOLLOWING TWO DAYS OF COMBAT BETWEEN ARMY AND SPECIAL POLICE UNIT (GROUPE MOBILE DE POLICE - GMP) STILL LOYAL TO FORMER PRESIDENT TSIRANA (OVERTHROWN IN 1972, DIED IN 1978).

4. POLICE ANGER LED TO A MEETING OF CITY OFFICIALS AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ON JUNE 14 AT WHICH MINISTER OF INTERIOR DEFENDED POLICE ROLE IN GENERAL, SAID THEY HAD NOT STARTED THE SHOOTING ON MAY 29, AND ASKED FOR COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING, SUPPORT, AND COOPERATION IN THEIR CONTINUING TASK ON MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER. ACCORDING TO ANOTHE SOURCE POLICE HAD WANTED RATSIRAKA HIMSELF TO EXCULPATE THEM. PRESIDENT HAD REFUSED TO DO SO BUT HAD IN COMPENSATION INFORMED POLICE THAT THEY WOULD AGAIN BE ALLOWED TO CARRY ARMS AND THAT THEIR BURNT OUT HEADQUARTERS BUILDINGS WOULD BE REBUILT.

5. IT WILL TAKE SOME DOING TO TURN THE ANTANANARIVO POLICE FORCE INTO AN EFFECTIVE AND RESPECTED INSTRUMENT

OF LAW ENFORCEMENT. ACCORDING TO A FRENCH POLICE
ADVISOR WHO HAS BEEN HERE FIVE YEARS, THIS FORCE IS
ONLY ABOUT ONE QUARTER OF THE SIZE REQUIRED FOR A
CITY LIKE THE MALAGASY CAPITAL. FURTHERMORE THE
MALAGASY AUTHORITIES HAVE COMMITTED THE CARDINAL

ERROR, ACCORDING HHOLICE DOCTRINE, OF
ASSIGNING POLICEMEN EXCLUSIVELY TO THEIR HOME CITIES,
WHERE THEY ARE MORE THAN EVER SUBJECT TO PRESSURE TO
FAVOR ACQUAINTANCES AND FIMALLY AS AGAINST THE IN-
TERESTS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC. THE PAY IS SO LOW,
\$75 A MONTH, THE SAME AS FOR AN UNSKILLED HOUSEHOLD
SERVANT, THAT MOST OF THEM ARE USUALLY ON THE LOOKOUT
FOR OPPORTUNITIESTO SHAKE DOQN JGREIGNERS. THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ANTANA 01399 01 OF 03 251229Z

FOREIGNERS MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM: MANY ROUTINELY
INSERT A 1,000 FRANK (\$5) BILL IN THEIR DRIVERS
LICENSES WHEN ASKED TO SHOW THEM. THERE HAS BEEN
NO DECREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF THEFTS AND MUGGINGS
IN THE PAST YEAR IN SPITE OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S
ACCENT ON IMPROVING THE PUBLIC SECURITY SITUATION.

6. THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE PROVINCES IS HARDER
TO EVALUATE, BUT WE GET STEADY REPORTS THAT IN MANY
LOCALITIES COMMUNITIES ARE TAKING THE MATTER OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, ACCORDING TO THEIR

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANTANA 01399 02 OF 03 251259Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-02 AID-05 PC-01 IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /123 W

-----047304 251325Z /46

R 2508642Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 784
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
DIA WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 ANTANANARIVO 1399

OWN LIGHTS. SOME OF THE PROBABLE CAUSES FOR THIS ARE: A) THE EMPASIS ON DECENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME; B) CONSEQUENT DISAGREEMENTS OR EVEN FRICTION BETWEEN LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES; AND C) THE CONSTANCT EGALITARIAN PROPAGANDA PUT OUT BY GOVERNMENT MEDIA. THE LAST NAMED FACTOR LEADS TO INCREASING AGGRESSIVENESS BY THE MOST DISADVANTAGED SEGMENTS OF THE RURAL POPULATION, OFTEN GOING INTO ARMED ROBBERY. THE OTHER TWO FACTORS LEAD TO EXTREME SLOWNESS OR COMPLETE LACK OF REACTION BY THE FURAL GENDARMERIE, WHOSE REPLY TO COMPLAINTS OFTEN TAKES THE FORM OF TELLING THE COMPLAINANTS THAT SINCE THEY NOW HAVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THEY SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN PROBLEMS. THE RURAL POPULATION IS THEREFORE LOOKING TO ITSELF TO ASSURE ITS OWN SECURITY, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANTANA 01399 02 OF 03 251259Z

WITH ALL THE ECESSES OF VIGILANTISM THAT THIS MAY ENTAIL. THE GOVERNMENT HAS MOUNTED SOME LARGE OPERATIONS AGAINST CATTLE THIEVES (REF B) AND IT IS REPORTED THAT MANY DEATH SENTENCES HAVE BEEN PRO- NOUNCED, BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED OR CARRIED OUT. SO FAR, ACCORDING TO MOST REPORTS COMING TO US FROM SEVERAL PROVINCES, THIS HAS NOT HELPED THE OVERALL LEVEL OF PUBLIC SECURITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

7. BACK IN THE CAPITAL THERE CONTINUES TO BE WIDESPREAD SPECULATION AS TO WHO, IF ANYONE, TURNED THE CITY'S YOUNG MAIL UNEMPLOYED (ZOAMS) LOOSE ON THE TOWN AFTER THE STUDENT-POLICE CONFRONTATION HAD VIRTUALLY PUT THE LATTER OUT OF ACTION ON MAY 29. MOST MALAGASY FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THERE WAS A GUIDING HAND BEHIND THIS OPERATION BUT VERY FEW PROFESS TO KNOW EXACTLY WHOSE IT WAS. IT IS ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THIS ELEMENT OF THE CAPITAL'S POPULATION NEEDED LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO HELP THEMSELVES TO GOODS FROM THE STORES OF WIDELY DISLIKED INDIAN MERCHANTS OR TO BURN DOWN POLICE BUILDINGS WHICH CONTAINED THEIR

POLICE RECORDS.

8. I BELIEVE THE ZOAMS WERE PROBABLY ENCOURAGED IN THEIR ACTIONS BY SOME CONSERVATIVE MARINA ELEMENTS HOSTILE TO RATSIRAKA'S RULE. IT IS MATTER OF RECORD THAT THESE ELEMENTS HAVE IN THE PAST TALKED SERIOUSLY OF STIRRING UP CIVIL DISORDER IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND POSSIBLY TO PROVOKE BRUTAL RETALIATION WHICH WOULD PROMOTE PUBLIC HOSTILITY. THE MASSACRE OF COMORIANS IN MAJUNGA IN DECEMBER 1976 MAY HAVE BEEN FOMENTED WITH THIS SAME OBJECTIVE IN MIND. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ANTANA 01399 02 OF 03 251259Z

IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE MAY 29-30 DESCENT ON THE CITY BY THE ZOAMS MAY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED OR AT LEAST TOLERATED BY THE FAR LEFT LEADER MANANDAFY, WHO HAS HAD CONTACTS WITH THE ZOAM ORGANIZATION IN THE PAST AND, ALTHOUGH HIMSELF A MEMBER OF THE SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE MOST LOGICAL ALTERNATIVE TO RATSIRAKA SHOULD THE LATTER FALTER.

9. RATSIRAKA IS THEREFORE PROBABLY RIGHT WHEN HE SAYS THERE ARE INDIVIDUALS AND ELEMENTS DELIBERATELY FOMENTING THIS TYPE OF DISORDER AND OTHERWISE ATTEMPTING TO DISCREDIT HIS REGIME. WHERE HE IS WRONG IS IN ATTRIBUTING ANY SUCH ACTION TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE. WHETHER OR NOT HE HIMSELF BELIEVES THIS ASSERTION, IT ENABLES HIM TO DODGE THE FACT, AT LEAST FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION, THAT HIS REGIME IS NOT OVERWHELMINGLY POPULAR, DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING VOTING FIGURES, AND THAT THERE ARE MALAGASIES WHO, DENIED THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPRESSING THEIR OPPOSITION THROUGH LEGAL MEANS, ARE WILLING TO TAKE SUCH ACTION TO WEAKEN HIM. IT IS MUCH MORE COMFORTING TO ATTRIBUTE ALL SUCH ACTIONS TO FOREIGNERS, PARTICULARLY THE IMPERIALIST BOGEYMAN, AND A FEW MISGUIDED PUBBETS.

10. IN ORDER TO ENCHANCE INTERNAL SECURITY AND EXTERNAL DEFENSE, PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA IS BRINGING NEW WEAPONRY INTO MADAGASCAR, MOST OF IT FROM THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. HE IS ALSO INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING NEW TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT TO MOVE HIS FORCES AROUND, AS THE DC-3'S HE HAS AT PRESENT ARE ON THEIR LAST LEGS. HIS ARMY'S NEED FOR MOBILITY WAS CONFIRMED ON MAY 30 - IT WAS ONLY THE ARRIVAL OF FORCES FROM THE PROVINCES, COMING VIA COMMANDEERED AIRLINERS, WHICH ENABLED ORDER TO BE RESTORED IN THE CITY. SO FAR THE MALAGASY HAVE LOOKED OVER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ANTANA 01399 02 OF 03 251259Z

SOVIET, ITALIAN, FRANCO-GERMAN, CANADIAN AND AMERICAN TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. IT APPEARS RIGHT NOW THAT THEY WOULD PREFER TO BUY LOCKHEED L-100'S BUT THE TRANS-ACTION IS BEING HELD UP WHILE THEY SEARCH FOR SOMEONE TO FINANCE THE SALE.

11. RATSIRAKA'S COMPLETE ABSENCE FROM PUBLIC VIEW DURING THE EVENTS OF LATE MAY AND THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH HAVE CONTINUED TO DRAW LITTLE PUBLIC INTEREST. HE MADE HIS FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT IN HIS PREDEPARTURE INTERVIEW AT THE AIRPORT BEFORE GOING OFF TO THE SOVIET UNION ON JUNE 28. IN EFFECT HE SAID HE COULD NOT DO EVERYTHING HIMSELF AND THAT IT HAD PROPERLY BEEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OTHER GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TO RESTORE ORDER. THIS WOULD BE MORE BELIEVABLE IF HE HAD NOT BEEN SO MUCH IN PUBLIC VIEW FOR THE PREVIOUS YEAR HARANGUING THE POPULATION ON ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND TELLING VARIOUS AUDIENCES HOW TO DO EVERYTHING FROM RUNNING A SHIPYARD TO CUTTING CANE OR DISTRIBUTING RICE. A FEW INDIVIDUALS HAVE COMMENTED MALICIOUSLY TO US

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANTANA 01399 03 OF 03 251301Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-02 AID-05 PC-01 IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /123 W
-----047360 251324Z /43

R 250864Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 785
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

DIA WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 ANTANANARIVO 1399

THAT HE HAD FLED THE CITY WHEN THE STUDENT MOB
HAD APPROACHED THE PALACE, OR THAT HE HAD EVEN GONE
ABOARD A SHIP OFF THE COAST TO BE READY TO GET AWAY.
BUT THESE CRITICISMS HARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN. THE
PRESIDENT MAY HAVE LOST SOME FACE AMONG HIS COLLEAGUES
IN THE UPPER REACHES OF THE GOVERNMENT, BUT HIS
STANDING WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOES NOT SEEM TO
HAVE SUFFERED. HE IS STILL ACCEPTED, BUT NOT
ADMIRER, RESPECTED, OR WIDELY LIKED. HE IS THE ONLY
PROMINENT FIGURE ON THE PUBLIC SCENE APPARENTLY
WILLING TO SEEK AND WIELD AUTHORITY AND THAT IS MORE
THAN ENOUGH TO ENSURE HIS CONTINUANCE AT THE HEAD OF
THE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PRESENT, WITHOUT ANY
RECOURSE TO PHYSICAL CONSTRAINT OR INTIMIDATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANTANA 01399 03 OF 03 251301Z

12. FOR THE LONG RUN, HOWEVER, THE MAY 29-30 BREAKDOWN
IN LAW AND ORDER CANNOT BUT HAVE A HARMFUL EFFECT
ON HIS LONGEVITY IN POWER. LAST YEAR HE PUBLICLY
AND CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC
SECURITY AS ONE OF THE AREAS MOST NEEDFUL (ALONG
WITH RICE DISTRIBUTION AND EDUCATION) OF GOVERNMENT
ATTENTION. SO FAR THE SITUATION HAS CERTAINLY NOT
IMPROVED AND MAY HAVE BECOME WORSE. THIS HASN'T
CREATED ANY ACTIVE MOVEMENT AGAINST HIM, BUT IS HAS
BEEN MARKED DOWN AS AN IMPORTANT POINT AGAINST HIM
SHOULD A DAY OF RECKONING EVER COME.BARRETT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAW, ANTIHIJACKING PROCEDURES, DECLARATION, SUMMIT MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ANTANA01399
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780304-0951
Format: TEL
From: ANTANANARIVO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780721/aaaaarky.tel
Line Count: 370
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4407e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1889443
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LAW AND ORDER IN MADAGASCAR: SEQUELS TO MAY 29-30 RIOTS
TAGS: PINS, MA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4407e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014